

OLD HOUSE - "ELTONHEAD MANOR"

Above Little Cove Point,

on The Cliffs of Calvert County, Maryland.

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*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

JOHN H. SCARFF, DISTRICT OFFICER

1012 KEYSER BLDG., BALTIMORE, MD.

OLD HOUSE - ELTONHEAD MANOR

Above Little Cove Point on  
the cliffs of Calvert County,  
Maryland.

Owner: Mr. Hamilton Owene, Editor  
The Evening Sun, Baltimore, Maryland

Date of Erection: Unknown

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Unknown

Present Condition: Ruin. The panelling removed to the  
Baltimore Museum of Art, in 1925.

Number of Stories: One and a half

Materials of construction: Foundation stone, chimneys brick,  
main house studs mortise and  
tenoned, clapboarded, kitchen 6  
inch logs clapboarded. Wood  
shingle roof

Other existing records: See "The Monograph Series" number 4  
volume XVI "Some Houses of Colonial  
Maryland" by John H. Scarff, which  
contains a photograph of the panelled  
room.

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HISTORICAL DATA:

The tract of land called Great Eltonhead Manor, consisting of 5603 acres, was laid out for Edward Eltonhead May 24, 1651, and the Manor was granted April 26, 1658, to Edward Eltonhead "One of the Masters of Chancery in Maryland."

It extended from the neighborhood of Cove Point Marsh down the Chesapeake Bay to the mouth of the Patuxent River at Drum Point, and up the river to the land called "Abingdon," later known as "Rouseby Hall."

The second owner was Captain Samuel Groome of London, who received it by grant in 1662 or 1664, and about 1680 Major Samuel Bourne acquired it - probably by purchase. He married Elizabeth, widow of Thomas Billingsby of Calvert County, and died in 1694 possessed of the entire manor. In his will he speaks of his dwelling plantation "Drum Point" so evidently he did not live in this house.

At his death Major Bourne was indebted to his father, Thomas Bourne, a quaker of London. His father took the Manor for the debt and died about 1704 in Calvert County. He bequeathed the Manor to his wife Mary, who died in 1706, possessed of the entire tract. In her will she directed that 2500 acres should be sold and 500 acres she bequeathed to her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Bourne, the widow of Samuel Bourne. She died in 1720. The 2500 acres were sold by Benjamin Bourne to John Rousby in 1725. The remainder, outside the 500 acres, was divided among the Bourne sons.

In 1788 George Bourne of Calvert County offered for sale in the Maryland Gazette a tract of 431 acres "including Little Cove Point." He mentioned no house nor improvement. On May 4, 1793, George Bourne sold 131 acres of Great Eltonhead Manor to Benjamin Travers of Dorchester County. The history of the place from then on to the present time is obscure. (These

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HISTORICAL DATA - Continued:

facts were supplied to the Survey by the Baltimore Museum of Art who received them from Mr. William B. Marye, Antiquarian of the Maryland Historical Society).

Adjacent to the old house is the tombstone of Benjamin Keene who, according to the inscription, was born in Dorchester County, and died, presumably, in Calvert County in 1815.

Mr. Hamilton Owens, the present owner, bought the place in 1910 from Mr. and Mrs. James Locke Weems, who bought it several years previously from a man named Breedon.

An old neighbor, the late Mr. Benjamin Franklin Catterton, told Mr. Owens the house had belonged during the Revolution to a Dr. Wyville, who sold it after his son had been killed in that war.

Mr. Owens first discovered the place in 1909 during a walking trip down the west side of the Chesapeake Bay. The house is situated one hundred feet above the Bay at the head of a little valley about a quarter of a mile long. A shelving beach extends from the rocky Little Cove Point north to the low marshy land near Cove Point over a mile away. The property must have been on the northern edge of the Manor. In 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Owens presented the paneling and stairway to the Baltimore Museum of Art. At that time scrub pine had grown up to a height of about twenty feet around the house. Pines grew throughout the old garden and amidst the nearby orchard trees, casting a green twilight over all. The paneling could only be moved

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HISTORICAL DATA - Continued:

after a road had been cut through the growth and it was hauled by oxen over a mile through this opening to the country road. Today the house, if it exists at all, is a complete ruin. The last time it was inhabited was in 1913, when Mr. and Mrs. Owens spent three weeks in the house immediately after their marriage.

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The entire work on this project, including the measurements made in 1925, and the drawings in 1936, were donated to the HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY by Wyatt and Nolting, Architects, Baltimore, Maryland.

*John H. Scott*